

Testimony of Chandra Ring
Regarding SB 1133
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE– Public Hearing, March 3, 2023

Thank you for allowing this opportunity to offer testimony on SB 1133. My name is Chandra Ring. I am a resident of Wilton, CT. I am a mother of four children (one at Bryn Mawr College and three enrolled in the Wilton Public Schools). I am also Wilton Youth Council's Executive Director. Wilton Youth Council is a local non-profit with the mission of promoting the well being of Wilton's students by empowering youth, parents and community.

Wilton Youth Council formed a Free Play Matters Task Force to inspire and educate the community about the critical importance of Free Play; and to facilitate the creation of more free play and free range opportunities for children. In order to work towards the restoration of play in our community, the Wilton Free Play Matters Task Force focused on three key areas: family / neighborhood, school and community. The positive results for children in our community have been overwhelming and the kids love these opportunities to show the adults in their lives how much they are capable of doing!

Research indicates that play allows children to achieve goals, solve problems, manage worry, grow from within, be self-confident, responsible, resilient, independent, and empathetic. Free play has declined over the last few decades, and across the nation, we are seeing the detrimental effects, including rising rates of anxiety and depression in youth. We are facing unprecedented levels of mental health disorders in our youth. We must create an environment that safely fosters independence, skill building and resilience.

Dr. Peter Gray said it best when he said "Play away-from-adults is traditionally how children have always learned the most important skills." This bill will empower parents to allow and encourage that necessary independent learning to return to childhood. This bill will empower our children, helping them learn resilience and problem solving. This bill will foster independence and empower parents to know their children, recognizing what different children can safely and appropriately do based on them as individuals. When we allow and encourage our children to explore, they grow and develop naturally as leaders, learn to cooperate, learn problem solving and so many more of the soft skills needed in their adult life. This bill is in the best interest of children and families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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